

a.) Amendment to the Claims

Claims 1-41 (Cancelled).

42. (Previously Presented) A method of producing a tablet which comprises (i) a granule containing an active substance, said granule bearing a coating film which enhances release in intestine or sustained release, and is destroyed when a molding material comprising said granule is compressed at tableting pressure greater than 1.3 ton/cm², (ii) a diluting agent and (iii) stearic acid or a stearic acid metal salt as a lubricant, comprising the steps of:

preparing a molding material by uniformly mixing said granule with the diluting agent, said molding material not containing any stearic acid or a stearic acid metal salt;

selecting a tableting machine comprising a die and a pair of punches in which stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt is applied only on surfaces of said die and said punches; and

operating said tableting machine to press said molding material and produce compressed tablets of said molding material at a tableting pressure of 0.7 to 1.3 ton/cm², wherein said stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt is provided only on a surface thereof and in an amount from 0.0001 to 0.2 weight percent per tablet.

43. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 42, wherein said stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt is applied to said die and pair of punches by the steps comprising:

housing said die and pair of punches in a spray chamber; and

spraying said stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt onto the surfaces of said die and pair of punches utilizing pulsating vibration air.

Claims 44-45 (Cancelled).

46. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 42 or 43, wherein said diluting agent is granular.

Claims 47-52 (Cancelled).

53. (Previously Presented) A compressed lubricated tablet produced by the process according to claim 42 or 43.

Claims 54-62 (Cancelled).

63. (Previously Presented) A method for maintaining a function of a compressed tablet which comprises (i) a granule containing an active substance, said granule bearing a coating film which enhances release in intestine or sustained release, and is destroyed when a molding material comprising said granule is compressed at tableting pressure greater than 1.3 ton/cm^2 , (ii) a diluting agent and (iii) stearic acid or a stearic acid metal salt as a lubricant, comprising the steps of:

preparing a molding material by uniformly mixing said granule with the diluting agent, said molding material not containing any stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt;

selecting a tableting machine comprising a die and a pair of punches in which said stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt is applied only on surfaces of said die and said punches; and

operating said tableting machine to press said molding material and produce compressed tablets of said molding material at a tableting pressure of 0.7 to 1.3 ton/cm^2 , wherein said stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt is provided only on a surface thereof and in an amount from 0.0001 to 0.2 weight percent per tablet.

Claims 64-71 (Cancelled).

72. (Currently Amended) The method according to ~~either of claims 63 or 64~~ claim 63, wherein said stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt is applied to said die and pair of punches by the steps comprising:

housing said die and pair of punches in a spray chamber; and

spraying said stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt onto the surfaces of said die and pair of punches utilizing pulsating vibration air.

73. (Previously Presented) A compressed lubricated tablet produced by the process according to claim 46.

Claims 74-79 (Cancelled).

80. (Previously Presented) A method of producing a tablet which comprises (i) a granule containing an active substance, said granule bearing a coating film which enhances release in intestine or sustained release, and is destroyed when a molding material comprising said granule is compressed at tableting pressure greater than 1.3 ton/cm², (ii) a diluting agent and (iii) stearic acid or a stearic acid metal salt as a lubricant, comprising the steps of:

preparing a molding material by uniformly mixing said granule with the diluting agent, said molding material not containing any stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt;

selecting a tableting machine comprising a die and a pair of punches in which said stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt is applied only on surfaces of said die and said punches; and

operating said tableting machine to press said molding material and produce compressed tablets of said molding material at tableting pressure from 0.7 to 1.3 ton/cm² without destroying said a coating film, wherein said stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt is provided only on a surface thereof and in an amount from 0.0001 to 0.2 weight percent per tablet.

81. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 80, wherein said stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt is applied to said die and pair of punches by the steps comprising:

housing said die and pair of punches in a spray chamber; and

spraying said stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt onto the surfaces of said die and pair of punches utilizing pulsating vibration air.

Claims 82-83 (Cancelled).

84. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 80 or 81, wherein said diluting agent is granular.

Claims 85-90 (Cancelled).

91. (Previously Presented) A compressed lubricated tablet produced by the process according to claim 80 or 81.

Claims 92-98 (Cancelled).

99. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 46, wherein said molding material comprises same amount of said granule and said diluting agent.

100. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 84, wherein said molding material comprises same amount of said granule and said diluting agent.

101. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 46, wherein said molding material is dry.

102. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 84, wherein said molding material is dry.

103. (New) The method according to claim 42 or 43, wherein said tableting pressure of said tableting machine at tableting operation is from 0.7 to 1.0 ton/cm².

104. (New) The method according to claim 63 or 72, wherein said tableting pressure of said tableting machine at tableting operation is from 0.7 to 1.0 ton/cm².

105. (New) The method according to claim 80 or 81, wherein said tableting pressure of said tableting machine at tableting operation is from 0.7 to 1.0 ton/cm².

106. (New) A method of producing a tablet which comprises (i) a granule containing an active substance, said granule bearing a coating film which enhances release in intestine or sustained release, and is destroyed when a molding material comprising said granule is compressed at tableting pressure greater than 1.3 ton/cm^2 , (ii) a diluting agent and (iii) stearic acid or a stearic acid metal salt as a lubricant, comprising the steps of:

preparing a molding material by uniformly mixing said granule with the diluting agent without containing any stearic acid or a stearic acid metal salt, said molding material being incapable of forming a tablet with a practical hardness at a tableting pressure from 0.7 to 1.3 ton/cm^2 when stearic acid or a stearic acid metal salt is contained;

selecting a tableting machine comprising a die and a pair of punches in which stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt is applied only on surfaces of said die and said punches; and

operating said tableting machine to press said molding material and produce compressed tablets of said molding material at a tableting pressure of 0.7 to 1.3 ton/cm^2 , wherein said stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt is provided only on a surface thereof and in an amount from 0.0001 to 0.2 weight percent per tablet.

107. (New) The method according to claim 106, wherein said stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt is applied to said die and pair of punches by the steps comprising:

housing said die and pair of punches in a spray chamber; and

spraying said stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt onto the surfaces of said die and pair of punches utilizing pulsating vibration air.

108. (New) The method according to claim 106 or 107, wherein said diluting agent is granular.

109. (New) A compressed lubricated tablet produced by the process according to claim 106 or 107.

110. (New) A method for maintaining a function of a compressed tablet which comprises (i) a granule containing an active substance, said granule bearing a coating film which enhances release in intestine or sustained release, and is destroyed when a molding material comprising said granule is compressed at tableting pressure greater than 1.3 ton/cm^2 , (ii) a diluting agent and (iii) stearic acid or a stearic acid metal salt as a lubricant, comprising the steps of:

preparing a molding material by uniformly mixing said granule with the diluting agent without containing any stearic acid or a stearic acid metal salt, said molding material being capable of forming a tablet with a practical hardness at a tableting pressure from 0.7 to 1.3 ton/cm^2 when stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt is contained;

selecting a tableting machine comprising a die and a pair of punches in which said stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt is applied only on surfaces of said die and said punches; and

operating said tableting machine to press said molding material and produce compressed tablets of said molding material at a tableting pressure of 0.7 to 1.3 ton/cm², wherein said stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt is provided only on a surface thereof and in an amount from 0.0001 to 0.2 weight percent per tablet.

111. (New) The method according to claim 110, wherein said stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt is applied to said die and pair of punches by the steps comprising:

housing said die and pair of punches in a spray chamber; and

spraying said stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt onto the surfaces of said die and pair of punches utilizing pulsating vibration air.

112. (New) A compressed lubricated tablet produced by the process according to claim 108.

113. (New) A method of producing a tablet which comprises (i) a granule containing an active substance, said granule bearing a coating film which enhances

release in intestine or sustained release, and is destroyed when a molding material comprising said granule is compressed at tableting pressure greater than 1.3 ton/cm^2 , (ii) a diluting agent and (iii) stearic acid or a stearic acid metal salt as a lubricant, comprising the steps of:

preparing a molding material by uniformly mixing said granule with the diluting agent without containing any stearic acid or a stearic acid metal salt, said molding material being incapable of forming a tablet with a practical hardness at a tableting pressure from 0.7 to 1.3 ton/cm^2 when stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt is contained;

selecting a tableting machine comprising a die and a pair of punches in which said stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt is applied only on surfaces of said die and said punches; and

operating said tableting machine to press said molding material and produce compressed tablets of said molding material at tableting pressure from 0.7 to 1.3 ton/cm^2 without destroying said a coating film, wherein said stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt is provided only on a surface thereof and in an amount from 0.0001 to 0.2 weight percent per tablet.

114. (New) The method according to claim 113, wherein said stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt is applied to said die and pair of punches by the steps comprising:

housing said die and pair of punches in a spray chamber; and

spraying said stearic acid or stearic acid metal salt onto the surfaces of said die and pair of punches utilizing pulsating vibration air.

115. (New) The method according to claim 113 or 114, wherein said diluting agent is granular.

116. (New) A compressed lubricated tablet produced by the process according to claim 113 or 114.

117. (New) The method according to claim 108, wherein said molding material comprises same amount of said granule and said diluting agent.

118. (New) The method according to claim 115, wherein said molding material comprises same amount of said granule and said diluting agent.

119. (New) The method according to claim 108, wherein said molding material is dry.

120. (New) The method according to claim 115, wherein said molding material is dry.

121. (New) The method according to claim 106 or 107, wherein said tableting pressure of said tableting machine at tableting operation is from 0.7 to 1.0 ton/cm².

122. (New) The method according to claim 110 or 111, wherein said tableting pressure of said tableting machine at tableting operation is from 0.7 to 1.0 ton/cm².

123. (New) The method according to claim 113 or 114, wherein said tableting pressure of said tableting machine at tableting operation is from 0.7 to 1.0 ton/cm².